

EDUCATION

Mike believes that every child should have the opportunity to receive a high quality education, regardless of their background or financial situation. This includes strong childcare and preschool programs; challenging early, middle, and high school curriculums that prepare students to succeed; dynamic career and technical educations that provide skills needed in today's world; and affordable post-secondary education that maintains our nation's competitiveness.

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Additional resources:

- U.S. Department of Education
- Maine Department of Education
- Students.gov
- 2009/2010 Guide to Federal Student Aid

Promoting Early Childhood Education

Preschool and elementary education provides an essential foundation for our students. Unfortunately, low-income children in Maine and throughout the nation often lack the necessary resources for a successful education. Programs like Head Start provide comprehensive education, health, nutrition, and parent involvement services to low-income prekindergarten-aged children and their families. Mike voted for the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act, which became law in December of 2007. This legislation reauthorized the program and helped provide 10,000 more children with access to important Head Start services.

Child care and development grants are another extremely important source of support for the early education of children in low-income families. Mike has called for substantial increases in funding for a number of programs, including Head Start, Early Head Start and Child Care and Development Block Grants.

- Over \$1.5 million in grants awarded to Maine County Head Start programs (11/19/09)
- House Approves Legislation to Improve Head Start Program for Low-Income Children (11/14/07)

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Fully Funding No Child Left Behind and IDEA

Before Mike was elected to Congress, No Child Left Behind passed and was signed into law with the great promise of a new federal commitment to education. Unfortunately, the federal government has continued to underfund local and state education efforts, even failing to support programs mandated by the federal government. Since the passage of No Child Left Behind, states and localities have been given billions of dollars less in federal funding than what was promised.

Mike has cosponsored legislation that would fully fund the No Child Left Behind Act. He has also cosponsored legislation that would fully fund the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), which was enacted in 1975 to ensure that all children, including disabled students, have access to free and appropriate public education. At the time, the federal government promised to pay 40% of the costs. But, the federal government has never made it to even 20%, which has forced local and state governments to make up the difference.

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Making Higher Education More Affordable

A strong system of college and university education has always given the United States an edge over other countries. However, for too many in Maine and throughout the nation, a college degree remains out of reach. Skyrocketing tuition costs have prevented many from getting a post-secondary education and saddled many of those who are able to attend college with crushing levels of student loan debt.

In Congress, Mike is working to make sure that the potential to pursue a college education is available to every child in Maine regardless of his or her economic background. In order to achieve this goal, Mike supports increasing the maximum Pell Grant award and making affordable financial aid more accessible. Mike also supports increased funding for the GEAR UP program, which encourages middle school students to become college-ready, and TRIO programs such as Upward Bound. Mike also helped pass the College Cost Reduction and Access Act into law in 2007, which substantially increased the amount and availability of student aid.

Most recently, Mike supported the Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act, which represents the single largest investment in aid to help students and families pay for college in history. The bill reforms the system of federal student loans to save taxpayers \$87 billion – and then invests \$77 billion of those savings back into education, particularly by making college more affordable, and directs \$10 billion back to the Treasury to reduce the deficit. Among its provisions, the bill provides substantial support to community colleges, increases the maximum Pell Grant from \$5,350 in 2009 to \$5,550 in 2010 and \$6,900 in 2019 and keeps interest rates low on subsidized federal student loans. A fact sheet put together by the House Education and Labor Committee on the overall legislation can be found [here](#).

With the price of college rising and income levels decreasing or at the very least remaining the same, it is important that we begin to level the playing field for all Maine students regardless of their income. Mike believes that every child should have the opportunity to receive a high quality education, regardless of their background or financial situation. We must ensure that affordable loans are available to those pursuing higher education, and that students can choose the type of loan that works best for them.

- Historic Student Aid Bill Contains Substantial Benefits for Maine Students (9/17/09)
- New Program to Make College More Affordable Starts Tomorrow (6/31/09)
- Michaud Votes to Send Landmark Higher Education Legislation to the President (7/31/08)
- Michaud Votes to Provide Historic Increase in College Financial Aid for Students and Families (9/6/07)

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Advancing Education for the Future

Mike is a strong supporter of the STEM fields (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics.) It is within these disciplines that the future lies. Everything from answers to our energy crisis and the solutions to climate change, to the cure for cancer and other debilitating diseases, will be discovered by bright men and women who are knowledgeable in these areas. We must work to strengthen our scientific programs and open these fields up to more Americans.

Mike supported passage of the America COMPETES Act, which was signed into law on August 9, 2007. This bill delivered more highly qualified teachers in the classroom in the fields of mathematics, science, engineering, technology, and critical foreign languages through grant programs that provide degrees in these areas with concurrent teacher certifications. In addition, it authorized competitive grants to establish programs focused on math for elementary and secondary schools including training for teachers with a focus on serving high-needs schools. [Click here](#) for more information on the America COMPETES Act.

Mike also supported a bill that invested more than \$31 billion in science, technology, innovation, math education, and workforce training. This innovation agenda was signed into law on December 16, 2009 as a part of the Consolidated Appropriations Act for 2010.

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Supporting Adult Education in Maine

Mike has always been a strong supporter of our nation's community colleges. The State of Maine has over 100 local Adult Education Programs which provide the opportunity for those in Maine to receive degrees and other accreditations. These degrees assist students in their pursuit of college degrees, and give them a serious advantage in competitive job markets.

The Maine Adult Education Association (MAEA) is a nonprofit organization that offers services to over 85% of cities and towns in Maine. The organization offers adult education and professional training, among other services. MAEA awards 2200 GEDs and 800 high school diplomas annually.

The Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act, which Mike helped pass in September of 2009, invests \$5.9 million to help finance projects for community college facilities in Maine. This will ensure that community college students can learn in modern, updated, state-of-the-art facilities by renovating campuses in need of repair or by constructing new facilities. The bill also creates a new competitive grant program for community colleges to improve instruction, work with local employers, improve student support services, and implement other innovative reforms that will lead to a college degree, certificate or industry recognized credential to help fulfill local workforce needs.

- Fact Sheet for Maine's Second Congressional District: The Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act - A Landmark Investment in Maine's Economic Future

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Encouraging Volunteerism

According to the Corporation for National and Community Service, more than 9,200 people are helping to meet local needs, strengthen communities, and increase civic engagement through 28 national service projects across Maine.

Mike is a strong supporter of volunteer programs because they are an important investment in our communities. He voted to pass the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act, which was signed into law on April 21, 2009. The bill will triple the number of volunteers to 250,000, and increase the education reward they receive. The education award will be linked to match future boosts in the Pell Grant scholarship in order to keep up with rising college costs.

Mike believes this new law will improve current programs and promote a stronger sense of service in our communities. So many in our state are involved and willing to step up and do this valuable work and this bill will help encourage more people to serve their communities.

- House Clears Landmark Volunteer Bill for President's Signature (3/31/09)
- Additional information on the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act

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Saving Jobs and Investing in Education

One of the most crucial ways that we can ensure a high quality education for students in Maine is through the teachers and education professionals in our schools.

During this time of economic uncertainty, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, signed into law on February 17, 2009, invested \$39.5 billion to prevent teacher layoffs and education cuts, as well as for school modernization projects. Most of this funding went directly to states in the wake of massive budget shortfalls to ensure that the quality educators in our schools could keep their jobs. Also contained in the "State Stabilization" fund was \$5 billion in incentive and innovation grants for student achievement, and \$8.8 billion for high priority renovation and public safety needs in our schools.

- Outline of education investments in H.R. 1, the Recovery Act (Committee on Education and Labor)

To continue these investments, on December 16, 2009, the House passed the Jobs for Main Street Act which included \$23 billion for an "Education Jobs Fund." This funding will go directly to states to distribute among school districts and higher education institutions for the purpose of retaining or creating jobs. Click on the link below to view a press release from the Committee on Education and Labor outlining the education investments in the Jobs for Main Street Act. The Senate has yet to act on this legislation.

- [Outline of education investments in the Jobs for Main Street Act \(Committee on Education and Labor\)](#)

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Improving Education Opportunities for Veterans

Mike has also been involved in improving educational opportunities for veterans. Mike has been a strong supporter of legislation such as the GI Bill for the 21st Century to deliver updated and expanded educational benefits to our nation's veterans. On June 30, 2008, the "GI Bill for the 21st Century" was signed into law. Before the bill became law, GI educational benefits paid only about 70% of a public college education. The new GI Bill provides up to a full, four-year college scholarship for Iraq and Afghanistan veterans. This puts educational benefits on par with those available after World War II. To learn more about Mike's work on behalf of our nation's veterans, [click here](#).

- [Information and resources on the new GI Bill](#)

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